Constantine Pobedonostzeff.

Andrew D. White, in the Century Magazine.

On arriving in St. Petersburg in November, 1892, there was one Russian whom I more desired to meet than any other—Constantine Pobedonostzeff. For some years I had seen his name in various English and American reviews, coupled with charges of bigotry, cruelty, hypocrisy—indeed, of the most hateful qualities which a human being can possess. But the fact remained that he was generally admitted to be the most influential personage in the Russian Empire under Alexander III., and that, though bearing the distinctive title of "Procurateur General of the Most Holy Synod," he was evidently no less powerful in civil than in ecclesiastical affairs. As to his history, it was understood to be as follows: When the Grand Duke Nicholas, the eldest son of Alexander II., a young man of gentle and kindly characteristics, greatly resembling his father, died upon the Riviera, the next heir to the throne was the Grand Duke Alexander, a stalwart, taciturn guardsman, respected by all who knew him for the honesty, simplicity and directness of his character, but one who, never having looked forward to a throne, had been brought up simply as a soldier, with few of the gifts and graces traditional among the heirs of the Russian monarchy since the days of the great Catherine. Therefore it was that it became necessary to extemporize for this soldier a training which should fit him for the manifold duties of the position so unexpectedly opened to him; and the man chosen as his tutor was a professor at Moscow distinguished as a jurist and theologian—a man of remarkable force of character, and devoted to Russian ideas as distinguished from those of western Europe.

During the dark and stormy days toward the end of his career, Alexander II. had called in as his main adviser General Loris Melikoff, a man of Armenian descent, in whom was mingled with the shrewd characteristics of his race a sincere desire to give to Russia a policy and development in accordance with modern ideas. The result is well known to the world. The Emperor having taken the advice of this and other counsellors—of deeply patriotic men like Miloutine, Samarin, and Tcherkasky—had freed the serfs within his empire (forty millions in all), had given his sanction to a vast scheme by which they were to arrive at the possession of landed property, had established local self government in the various provinces and districts of the empire, had improved the courts of law, had introduced western ideas into legal procedure, had greatly mitigated the severities formerly exercised toward the Jews, and had virtually sanctioned a constitution which, in all probability, would have been promulgated at his approaching birthday. But this did not satisfy the nihilistic sect. What more they wanted it is hard to say. It is very doubtful whether Russia even then had arrived at a state of civilization when the institutions which Alexander II. had conceded could be received by her wholly with profit. But, with their vague longings for fruit on the day the tree was planted, the leaders of the anarchist movement decreed the death of the Emperor the greatest benefactor that Russia has ever known, and one of the greatest that humanity has known, and his assassination followed. It was perhaps the most fearful blow ever struck at liberty, for it blasted the hopes and aspirations of over a hundred millions of people, doubtless for many generations.

At his death the sturdy young guardsman became the Emperor Alexander III. It is related by men conversant with Russian affairs that at the first meeting of the imperial councillors, Loris Melikoff, believing that the young sovereign would be led by filial reverence to continue the liberal policy to which the father had devoted his life, made a speech, taking this for granted, and that the majority of the councillors seemed fully in accord with him, when suddenly there arose in the council this tall, gaunt, scholarly man, who—at first very simply, but finally with burning eloquence—presented a different view. According to the chroniclers of the period, Pobedonostzeff told the Emperor that all so-called liberal measures, including the constitution, were a delusion; that, however such things might be suited to western Europe, they were not suited to Russia; that the constitution of that Empire had been from time immemorial the will of the autocrat directed by his own sense of responsibility to the Almighty; that no other constitution was possible in Russia; that this alone was fitted to the traditions, the laws, the ideas of the hundred millions of various races under the sway of the Russian sceptre; that in other parts of the world constitutional liberty, so called, had already shown itself an absurdity—socialism, with its plots and bombs, appearing in all quarters, attempts making against rulers of nations everywhere, and the best of Presidents having been assassinated in the very country where free institutions were supposed to have taken the most complete hold. He insisted that the principle of authority in human government was to be saved, and that this principle existed as an effective force only in Russia. This speech is said to have carried all before it. As its immediate result came the retirement of Loris Melikoff, followed by his death, not long afterward, upon the Riviera; the entrance of Pobedonostzeff among the most cherished councillors of the Emperor; and, as the consequence of this, the suppression of the constitution, the discouragement of every liberal tendency, and that complete reaction which is in full force at the present hour.

Von Arnim's Grave.

English Illustrated Magazine.

In an ancient village, full of traces and signs of habitation beyond Norman times right back (through Danish, Saxon, Roman and Celtic occupations) to the non-Aryan, Iberic, Neolithic dwellers, in the old burial ground of the Saxon church founded late in the tenth century, to find a modern chieftain's grave of the Teutonic race—that of a "great fief" of the German Empire—comes as a surprise and looks like a romance. A modern warrior laid to rest in the burial ground of a church built by the Abbess and "The Benedictines" of the religious house of "St. Mary de Chatris" (as Domesday book has it) in the Isle of Ely, upon the demesne land of their manor of Minchinbury or Nunsbury, in the parish of Barley; which ancient structure afterwards made way for a more substantial Norman edifice, and of this latter the tower still remains. Our thoughts go back to the time of the Confessor, when the sons of the rival houses of Godwine and Loefric held under the King, and the fighting men of the village gathered to the English cause for the coming struggle at Senlac; or, led by Hereward the Wake, made the last English stand against the Frenchmen in the Isle of Ely. A simple head stone, in the form of a cross, overhung with cypress and yew, marks off the mound of green turf from those of many others hard by. A quiet, unobtrusive resting place, indeed, for the mortal remains of "Heinrich Count Arnim" and "Emma, his wife." The occasional summer visitors who walk round the Church of St. Margaret's, Barley—a retired agricultural village nestling among the North Herts Hills—are puzzled to account for so unusual, and it would seem, out-of-place grave, so far removed from the Fatherland. And to tell the story in brief outline will be to satisfy a curiosity more than local, and at the same time to add another touch of romance to the history of the Hungarian cause, as well as to introduce to the reader episodes in the chequered career of a powerful and pathetic personality that passed through the domain of European politics only to disappear from public view; first as an unknown exile in our great metroplis, and, then, under the cover of the green turf in a remote rural village of the land of refuge open to the heterogeneous crowd of continental exiles.

Count von Arnim, born the year before Waterloo, was the head of the great German family of that name. Almost directly he entered into the political and social life of the Prussian capital, he developed what were then regarded as strong radical notions, and was from the very beginning bitterly opposed to the growing influence and conservative policy of Bismarck. And being somewhat hot headed, and, above all things, a great lover of fighting, it is not surprising that, what with his ardent temperament and his advanced political opinions he grew more and more discontented with home affairs, and was ready to find an outlet, should occasion arise, in some other quarter. The opportunity came in the Hungarian rising, and von Arnim left the standing army and joined his fortunes to those of Kossuth and his party. In the lamentable quarrels between Kossuth, its Governor President, and the Hungarian military leaders, especially Gœrgei, the Count zealously took the part of Kossuth, and bitterly opposed the decision of the latter to give way to Gœrgei, and to retire in his favor. Events proved Arnim to have been in the right; and for the time he left the country, with Kossuth, on the treachery of Gœrgei, who, immediately on attaining supreme power, surrendered himself and his army into the hands of the Russians. The Prussian Landwehr were called out and the Count had necessarily to decide whether he would disobey the summons or throw up the party of Hungarian freedom. He decided to do the former, not being the man to forsake a falling cause.

When the differences between Austria and Hungary were settled in 1867, at the instigation of Deak, von Arnim came to England, as he feared if he went back to Germany and stood his trial for shirking the Landwehr mobilization, he might be interned in a military fortress and never be brought to trial. For, as he himself said, his enemies were powerful, and he had fatally wounded in duels two members of great families. Being penniless in London, he with characteristic energy looked about for some honorable means of obtaining a livelihood for himself, the German lady he had married and his young son. The livelihood was successfully obtained in the setting up of a curative gymnasium on Ling's Swedish system. Here his mastery of the art of fence stood him in good stead. Here it was, as a patient that the then, Rector of Barley, the Rev. R. A. Gordon, made his acquaintance, and quickly won his confidence and friendship in a way which those who were privileged to know the kindly and courteous rector, always ready to do a service, will at once understand. The outer crust of reticence was broken through, and the outlaw, who passed with the public as Major Loeffler (his mother's name), revealed his identity and disclosed his eventful history. The difficulties of his position from a German point of view were by no means small. As we have said, he had married a German lady, but as she was not ennobled, his children were disqualified by Prussian law from succeeding to his title and vast estates. However, as one of the "great fiefs," he possessed the power of adoption, which he was naturally desirous of exercising in favor of his own son. And all might yet have gone well had a little more discretion been exercised, for von Arnim possessed a tried friend in Count von Moltke, who was in constant communication with him on military tactics during the Franco-Prussian war.